

---

## VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ March/April/May 2017

### Note from the Director

Greetings! We are now fully into the bloom of spring here in Washington, D.C. and around much of the country. As we move into Memorial Day, I hope our readers are able to take a moment to reflect, remember and honor those who sacrificed so much for our country. We are blessed in countless ways by the lives of those who have served in our armed forces, and we are fortunate to serve those who have served us through our work with the VA.

Speaking of inspiration, VA Interim Deputy Secretary Scott Blackburn shared with us that he was moved and inspired by his inter-governmental site visit with Taos Pueblo leadership and Veterans this spring. Mr. Blackburn, accompanied by Albuquerque VA Medical Center Director Andy Welch and Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Director Sammie Quillen, was warmly greeted by Taos Pueblo Governor Ruben Romero, Tribal Secretary Floyd Gomez, and other tribal officials when he arrived by Blackhawk helicopter. During his stay, he toured the pueblo, visited with tribal officials, Veterans, family members and service providers in the Traditional Council Hall, and enjoyed a meal graciously prepared by mothers and wives supporting the event. Testimonies were shared regarding Veterans struggling with accessing benefits and services once they returned home, cultural competency issues related to the Taos VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic, funding for a tribal Veterans memorial and the need for funding to support the establishment and operation of Veterans programs on tribal lands. Mr. Blackburn was very clear with VA leadership following the event that commitments were made not only to follow up with tribal officials from Taos Pueblo and across Indian Country, commitments to dedicate time and resources focused on helping Veterans heal and move forward with their lives once they return home. We're looking forward to implementing some specific recommendations and suggestions, in collaboration with tribes, made as a result of the visit to Taos Pueblo in the months ahead. Specifics will be shared in our next newsletter edition.

Moving on to updates from our field tribal relations specialists, Terry Bentley presented to the CalVet Veteran Service Officer Quarterly training, providing a regional and national VA/tribal relations update by OTGR. Terry enlisted me and Peter Vicaire to help with training the Veterans Benefits Administration Pacific District Regional Directors on the protocol and process of working with tribal governments within their service catchment area. The training was informative, fun and interactive and we plan to introduce it to senior leadership across VA. Most recently, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, OTGR (led by Terry) and the Oregon State Department of Veterans Affairs hosted Tribal Veteran Representative training and as of this writing, Terry will be attending the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians meeting in Portland, OR the last week of May. On the horizon, for the Pacific District are **two Veterans training summits**. The first event is hosted by the Nez Perce Tribe June 15-17, 2017 at the Clearwater Casino Resort in Lewiston, ID. The second event is hosted by the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada and will be held June 23-25, 2017 at the Grande Sierra Casino Resort in Reno, NV. Both should be informative and I encourage all of our readers who are out that way to attend if possible. For more information, just email [Terry.Bentley@va.gov](mailto:Terry.Bentley@va.gov).

In the Southwest, OTGR once again, in collaboration with our colleagues from the Albuquerque VA, sponsored the VA outreach booth at the annual Gathering of Nations Powwow. Over 1200 inquiries were made to the staff manning the booth. This level of inquiry is consistent year in and year out. If you have a community event in your area and would like to schedule a VA outreach booth, don't hesitate to email [David.Ward@va.gov](mailto:David.Ward@va.gov). We'll get you connected to the right folks. These outreach opportunities provide a critical link between Veterans and the services and benefits available to them and their families from the VA. There are also Veterans Training Summits

---

coming up in the Southwest during the next couple of months. Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo (New Mexico) is hosting a **one day Veterans Training Summit** on May 23, 2017. The summit will be held at the Santa Claran Hotel and Casino in Espanola, NM. Contact Homana at [LoRae.Pawiki@va.gov](mailto:LoRae.Pawiki@va.gov) for more information and to obtain more information on three additional Veterans Training Summits that Homana is involved in planning throughout the summer into the early fall. I should also mention that Homana played a key role in working out the logistics of the Interim Deputy Secretary's visit with Taos Pueblo officials. She was our "eyes and ears" on the ground. We are especially thankful for her support and hard work dedicated to making the engagement positive and successful.

Our Oklahoma-based specialist, Mary Culley, has been rolling up her sleeves, meeting with tribes to provide technical assistance primarily on tribal Veterans Affairs programming and development. She's also had meetings focused on the Inter-Tribal Veterans Stand Down scheduled for later this year and has a number of announcements to share for our next newsletter edition. If you have questions for Mary about activities and ongoing projects with tribal governments in the Southern Plains/Southeastern part of the U.S., just send her an email: [Mary.Culley@va.gov](mailto:Mary.Culley@va.gov).

Finally, last but not least, Peter Vicaire traveled to Springfield, SD to visit property the Santee Sioux Tribe purchased with its long-term goal of turning it into a residential Veteran treatment program. He was most recently in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, where he met with tribal leaders from the United Tribes of Michigan and provided them with information on programs and opportunities for their Veterans. His forthcoming travel will include trips to the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin as well as to a National Congress of American Indians Veterans Committee meeting in Uncasville, CT and then the Passamaquoddy Tribe of Maine for its Native American Veteran Day. He is also in the early stages of planning a Veterans event with the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, tentatively scheduled for August 9<sup>th</sup>.

We plan to have a June edition of the OTGR newsletter that will cover a lot of the work projected throughout the summer and will also include announcements and projects on the horizon in the months ahead so you won't want to miss it. If you have announcements or content to include in the June edition, send to [Peter.Vicaire@va.gov](mailto:Peter.Vicaire@va.gov). We look forward to hearing from you.

Happy Reading,



**Stephanie Birdwell**

Links to non-Federal services are provided solely as a service to our readers. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and none should be inferred. VA is not responsible for the content of the individual organization web pages found at these links nor the information provided on these events by organizations or individuals.

# SERVING VETERANS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

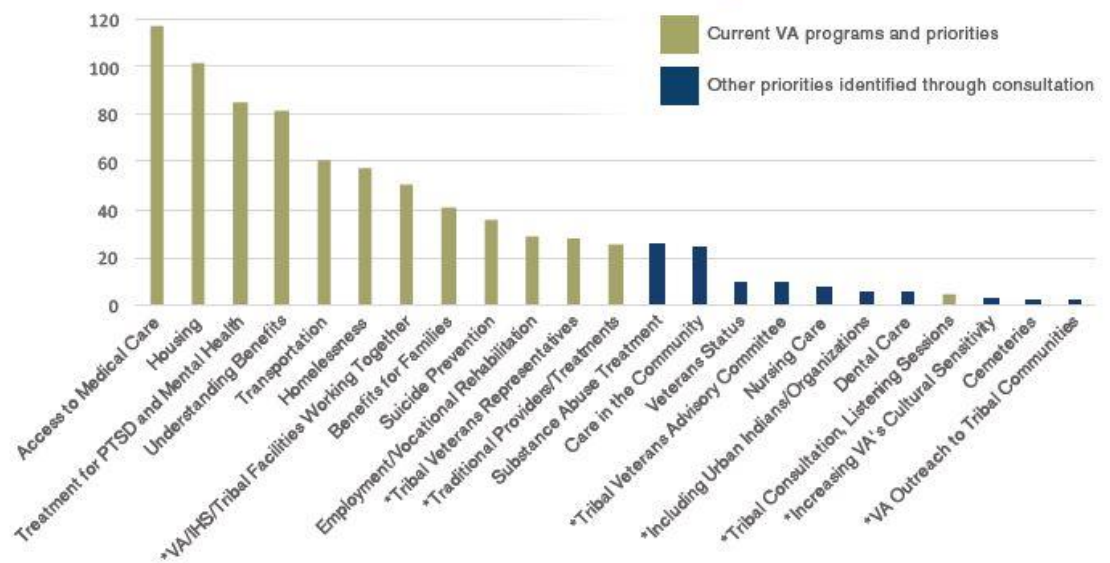
## Priorities from 2016 Tribal Consultation

In 2016, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conducted tribal consultation with all 567 federally recognized tribes. VA asked tribes to identify their top 3 to 5 priorities for serving Veterans in Indian Country. Tribal leaders, national and regional tribal organizations, Veterans, and other designated representatives offered their input. This fact sheet describes the responses received.

### Tribes' Top 5 Priorities for Serving Veterans in Indian Country

1. Access to medical care
2. Addressing housing and homelessness
3. Treatment for PTSD and mental health
4. Understanding benefits, including benefits for families
5. Transportation

### Tribes' Priorities for Serving Veterans



Respondents ranked their priorities from 1 through 5. The graph shows which priorities received the highest ranks compared to other priorities. To determine the top five priorities, some similar items were combined, such as housing and homelessness.

\* Starred priorities are culturally specific items relevant to American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments and Veterans. VA recognizes the importance of culturally specific efforts in their relationships and work with tribal nations.

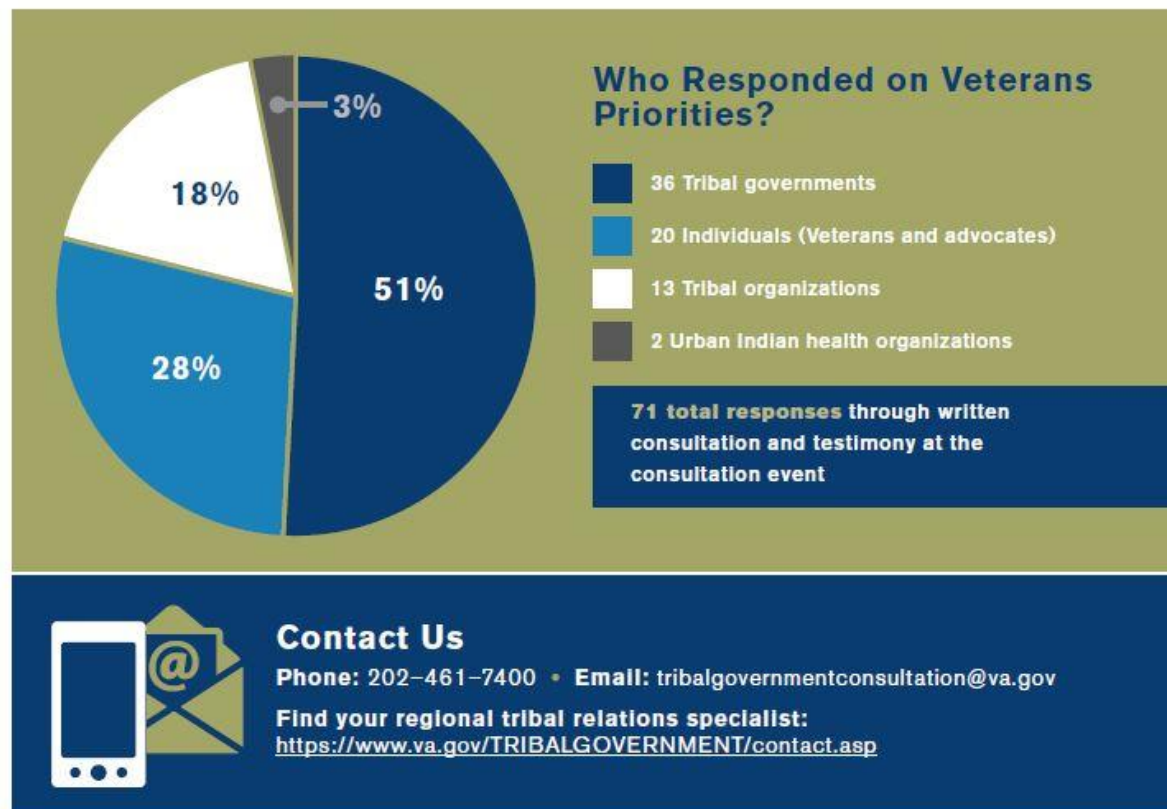


## Tribes' Other Priorities for Veterans

Most priorities identified in consultation fell within **13 current VA programs/priorities** for Veterans in Indian Country. Notably, consultation respondents identified **10 other priorities** for Veterans in addition to the more recent focus of VA efforts:

- **Substance abuse treatment** – Of all the other priorities, substance abuse treatment was mentioned most frequently. Some respondents named it as their highest priority.
- **Care in the Community** – VA's Consolidated Care Plan – Some representatives named continuing tribal reimbursement agreements with VA as their highest priority for serving Veterans.
- **Including Urban Indians and Urban Indian organizations** – Some respondents recommended that Urban Indian organizations be included more effectively in VA's efforts in Indian Country.
- **Veterans status** – Some respondents noted that determining Veteran status (benefit, disability, and discharge status), and changing it when necessary, is very difficult.
- **Tribal Veterans cemeteries** – Some tribes requested assistance in accessing VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program through the National Cemetery Administration.
- **A tribal Veterans advisory health care committee** – Some respondents recommended that VA have a tribal advisory committee as do other executive agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

A small number of respondents mentioned other priorities: nursing home care and benefits, dental care, increasing VA's cultural sensitivity, and ongoing VA outreach to tribal communities as priorities.



## Meet VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations

Here's a [webinar](#) [1:05:56] that was made by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and published on YouTube back on March 29, 2017.

"Do you know where to start to connect the Veterans in your community to health benefits and long-term services and supports (LTSS) through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)? One of the best resources to help tribal communities find the right "doorway in" to VA and its many services is VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations.

In our March 22 webinar, we're pleased to welcome a panel of presenters from VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations, including the Office Director and regional specialists for every VA region. After this webinar, you'll know who to call with questions about VA's tribal programs and collaborations."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoFXLtg6cZ8&feature=youtu.be>

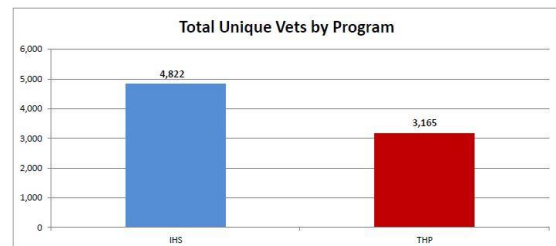
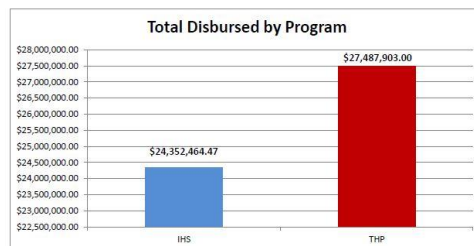


## VA Reimburses almost \$52 Million to IHS and Tribal Health Programs

Tribal health clinics interested in entering into a reimbursement agreement with VA for serving veterans should send an initial note of interest to:

[tribal.agreements@va.gov](mailto:tribal.agreements@va.gov)

National Data				
Total Disbursement for entire IHS/THP Program - Agmt Date to FYTD	Total Disbursement by Program - Agmt Date to FYTD			Total Unique Veterans for entire IHS/THP Program - Agmt Date to FYTD
	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	
\$51,844,674.47	IHS	\$24,352,464.47	4,822	7,839
	THP	\$27,487,903.00	3,165	
Total Disbursement - Out of System Ret repayments (only)	Total Disbursement of Out of System Ret repayments (only) - <i>are included in above totals</i> <small>payments</small>			Total Unique Veterans - Out of System Ret repayments (only)
	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	
\$19,795.23	IHS	\$15,488.23	638	721
	THP	\$0.00	0	





## National Museum of the American Indian Director Visits Reno-Sparks Indian Colony

The Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) has been charged by Congress with building a National Native American Veterans Memorial, and on Monday, veterans and had a chance to comment on the pending design and construction.

Native Americans have served in the United States military in every major conflict since the Revolutionary War. In recent decades, they have served in greater numbers per capita than any other ethnic group. So, the museum has begun preliminary plans to construct this memorial in the next four years to give all Americans the opportunity to learn of the proud and courageous tradition of service of Native Americans in the Armed Forces of the United States.

The NMAI and the advisory committee are currently conducting consultations to share plans for the memorial and to seek input and support. Regional events, like the one being held at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC), bring together tribal leaders, Native veterans, and community members. RSIC Tribal Chairman Arlan D. Melendez, a Marine Corps veteran, co-hosted a consultation for the memorial at the Reno-Sparks Tribal Health Care Center on May 1. Veterans, their family members, professionals whom work with veterans and members of the community attended.

The service and sacrifice of Native American veterans, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, spans nearly two and a half centuries of American history. During World War II, over 44,000 Native Americans served in the U.S. military. Hundreds of Hopi, Navajo, Comanche, and other Native language speakers—Code Talkers—played a crucial role. More than 42,000 Native Americans served during the Vietnam War. Today, the U.S. Department of Defense estimates more than 24,000 American Indian and Alaska Native men and women are on active duty, and more than 150,000 veterans self-identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

An advisory committee for the memorial has been formed, led by the Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne) and Chickasaw Nation Lieutenant Governor Jefferson Keel. The group, composed of tribal leaders and veterans from across Native America, is assisting with outreach to communities and veterans and advising on plans for the memorial.

In the fall of 2020, the museum will launch a juried competition to select a design for the memorial. The National Native American Veterans Memorial will be located prominently on the museum's grounds on the National Mall, between the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and the U.S. Capitol. The dedication ceremony is planned for Veterans Day 2020, to unveil the memorial and honor the immense contributions and patriotism of Native Americans in the U.S. Armed Forces.





Smithsonian  
National Museum of the American Indian



# PATRIOT NATIONS

## NATIVE AMERICANS IN OUR NATION'S ARMED FORCES



**The Native American Women Warriors** lead the grand entry during a powwow in Pueblo, Colorado, June 14, 2014. From left: Sergeant First Class Mitchelene BigMan (Apsáalooke [Crow]/Hidatsa), Sergeant Lisa Marshall (Cheyenne River Sioux), Specialist Krissy Quinones (Apsáalooke [Crow]), and Captain Calley Cloud (Apsáalooke [Crow]), with Tia Cyrus (Apsáalooke [Crow]) behind them. Photo by Nicole Tung

### New traveling exhibition available

*Patriot Nations: Native Americans in Our Nation's Armed Forces* tells the remarkable history of the brave American Indian and Alaska Native men and women who have served in the United States military. Native peoples have participated in every major US military encounter from the Revolutionary War to today's conflicts in the Middle East, serving at a higher rate in proportion to their population than any other ethnic group.

The contributions of Native servicemen and women have been largely unrecognized.

This will soon change. The *Patriot Nations* exhibition announces the development of the National Native American Veterans Memorial, requisitioned by Congress to be placed on the grounds of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC.



**General Douglas MacArthur**, commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in the South Pacific, on an inspection trip of American battle fronts, late 1943. From left Staff Sergeant Virgil Brown (Pima), First Sergeant Virgil F. Howell (Pawnee), Staff Sergeant Alvin J. Vilcan (Chitimacha), General MacArthur, Sergeant Byron L. Tsingine (Diné [Navajo]), Sergeant Larry Dekin (Diné [Navajo]), U.S. Army Signal Corps



**"We serve this country  
because it's our land. We  
have a sacred purpose to  
protect this place."**

—Jeffrey Begay, Diné [Navajo] veteran

Members of the Ton-Kon-Gah, or Kiowa Black Leggings Society, discuss what it means to be a veteran before the start of a ceremony in memory of those who fought. The tipi depicts battles in which Kiowas participated and lists the names of all Kiowas killed in combat since World War II. Near Anadarko, Oklahoma, 2014. Photo by Nicole Tung

#### EXHIBITION CONTENT

The exhibition consists of sixteen full-color, free-standing banners. Designed to be displayed in a variety of indoor spaces, *Patriot Nations* is easy to set up and take down and is a great complement to veteran-related displays or events.

#### BANNERS

1. Introduction to *Patriot Nations: Native Americans in Our Nation's Armed Forces*
2. Why Do American Indians Serve?
3. Conflicting Loyalties
4. The Civil War
5. Army Scouts
6. World War I
7. Code Talkers
8. World War II
9. Ira Hayes
10. The Thunderbirds
11. Recruiting from Chilocco Indian School
12. Korea
13. Vietnam
14. Global Conflicts in the 21st Century
15. Our Spirits Will Protect You
16. Be Part of a Historic Moment:  
The National Native American Veterans Memorial

#### SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Banner with base structure (installed): 4 ft. width x 7.5 ft. height. Recommended running wall space: 160 ft. if displayed side by side (you may opt to display the banners differently to fit your space).

#### SPECIFICATIONS

The exhibit is packed in four standard road cases, each road case containing four retractable banners. Each retractable banner is packed in a padded canvas carrying case along with the vertical display rod for that banner.

#### ROAD CASES

Dimensions: 56 x 19 x 19 in.  
Weight empty: 20 lbs.  
Weight full: 80 lbs.

#### RELATED MATERIALS

The exhibition is accompanied by design templates for an invitation, press release, print or web ad, and other informational materials.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.AmericanIndian.si.edu](http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu)

Email: [nmal-nativeveteransmemorial@si.edu](mailto:nmal-nativeveteransmemorial@si.edu)




*Patriot Nations: Native Americans in Our Nation's Armed Forces* is produced by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. The exhibition was made possible by the generous support of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.





ROBERT R.  
MCCORMICK  
FOUNDATION

Trickster Art Gallery 

## 3<sup>rd</sup> National Gathering of American Indian Veterans:

— Celebrating *all* U.S. Military —



July 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>

Cantigny Park • 1S151 Winfield Rd Wheaton • IL 60189



### Head Staff

Honorary Head Veteran:  
**GEORGE MARTIN**

Commander of  
Native IL Veterans:  
**MIKE PAMONICUTT**

Emcee:  
**MARK DENNING**

### Friday

Traditional Dinner  
for Veterans & Families

### Saturday

- Grand Entry
- Town Hall Meeting
- Special Code Talker Session
- Vietnam Veterans' Pinning Ceremony

### Sunday

- Breakfast offered
- Closing Town Hall Meeting

### Listen to WWII and Code Talker Stories



### Vietnam Veterans' Pinning Ceremony



**Accommodations: Hilton Lisle/Naperville**  
3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle, IL 60532, USA  
Hotel (630) 505-0900, Direct (630) 245-7644  
\$99 rates, \$89 for veterans. Scheduled transportation

### Town Hall Special Guests:

- NCAI Veteran Co-Chair
- Smithsonian NMAI Monument committee
- Tribal Government Relations - DC
- AI/AN Veteran Liason - DC
- Bemidji Office MN
- CIMC Native Labor
- Soldiers for Live - DC
- Pentagon Vietnam Commemorative Committee

For more info and to register go to [www.trickstergallery.com](http://www.trickstergallery.com)

Native Bands and Dancers

**All Veterans, Eras And Tribes  
Welcome!**



**If you served 1st Division Army (Big Red One)  
Please Contact: Cantigny Park's Honor Club**

For More Info

Contact Trickster Art Gallery:  
Phone: (847) 301-2090

### Sponsors



## National Gathering of American Indian Veterans



Here's a 16-page [Event Report](#) for the second annual gathering, organized by the [Trickster Art Gallery](#), which took place in Wheaton, Illinois from August 19-21, 2016. Mark your calendar for the next one, which is again at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, IL from July 21-23, 2017.



## 2016 National Gathering of American Indian Veterans



## Event Report





## Tribal member Korean War MIA dog tags found, remains being tested

Here's an older [article](#) by B.L. Azure which ran in the Car-Koosta News.

“There are two things constantly on the minds of young men sent to war: their mother and abandonment on the battlefield. The military’s promise to the young men serving in war zones is that they won’t be left behind on fields of battle and all means will be used to find those Missing In Action no matter the cost or how long it takes. The mothers are always in the hearts and minds of young men at war especially at that time just before time ends.

Corporal Frank J. Ducharme, born in 1931 and went Missing in Action in the Korean War, Wednesday, May 16, 1951 — he was 19 years old. Following initial notification of him missing, his family received an official Missing In Action notice from the U.S. Army in 1952. Two years later they received another official Army notice reaffirming Ducharme’s continuous MIA status but with the promise that he will never be forgotten. Sixty-four years later the never forgotten fallen warrior has come back in memory. His dog tags and potential remains were found in the Hongcheon River area near Gangwon, Korea Oct. 21, 2015.

Ducharme went MIA on the first day of the second phase of the Communist Chinese and North Korean Spring Offensive that began May 15, 1951. Ducharme went missing is what is known as the May Massacre. Ducharme’s Army unit, H Company, 2nd Battalion, 38th Infantry, 2nd (Infantry) Division was at the point of Task Force Zebra, ahead of the allied offensive line along the 38th parallel. Task Force Zebra was set to begin a major encounter with the Communist forces to the north of them scheduled to begin May 16. The patrol base Ducharme was at was established well ahead of the line of other allied forces. To the north of them awaited more that 100,000 Communist forces. The evening of May 16, a large portion of the Communist forces began to probe Task Force Zebra’s outposts, Ducharme’s 2nd Battalion of approximately 800 soldiers was the first to engage with the North Korean and Chinese forces. Human waves of Communist forces attacked the 2nd Battalion outpost. During the fierce to-the-end fighting Ducharme went missing.

Sixty-four years later the missing but never forgotten fallen warrior has come back. His dog tags and potential remains were found in the Hongcheon River area near Gangwon, South Korea Oct. 21, 2015. “Last year, the ‘Bring Them Home’ project called me and asked some questions about our family and wanted samples of our DNA,” Irvine said. Her brother Steve Ducharme provided samples. “Since last





year we have received a couple of letters notifying us that the Army is still working on identifying the remains.” They have kept her posted on the latest developments when they happen.

“They still are not sure that the remains are my brothers,” Irvine said. She was two years old when Frank went missing. “The Army requested that we send more DNA samples, this time from the maternal side of the family.” Irvine’s elder sister Rhoda Hayward of Tacoma, Wash. recently submitted her DNA to be analyzed and the family is waiting on the results. If there is a DNA match it will fill a 65-year-old void felt by the Ducharme family. On the Monday prior to Veterans Day her sister Rhoda received Frank’s dog tags. The family is now awaiting the completion of verifying Rhoda’s DNA. If it is a match, Frank’s remains will be repatriated and burial ceremonies will ensue.

“We don’t have the results yet on the DNA tests yet but the Army personnel thinks the remains are my brother. When he comes home we will have a service for him,” Carrie Irvine said last Thursday when she acknowledged vague memories of her older brother. “Even though I didn’t really know him, he is very real to me. This does bring up a flood of emotions for me. Sometimes I have wondered if he was real, it was so long ago and I was so young. I knew him as my brother that went missing in the Korean War but little else. Still he is real to me. Still he is my brother. It is really amazing how this has worked out.”

Frank Ducharme’s mother and father are long gone but his family remains. And soon, it looks like he will be reunited with them. They never forget him and the Army never forgot its promise to its soldiers. The Korean War began June 25, 1950 and ended July 27, 1953. The U.S. armed forces lost 33,686 in battle, and another 2,380 in non-battle deaths.”

## Interim Deputy Secretary for U.S. Veterans Affairs visits Taos Pueblo



Arriving in a Blackhawk helicopter April 21, 2017, the Interim Deputy Secretary for U.S. Veterans Affairs, Scott Blackburn, met Taos Pueblo Gov. Ruben A. Romero, tribal officials, and veterans from the area during an Intergovernmental Site Visit and Cultural Tour. The meeting took place in the tribe's Traditional Council Hall following a procession through the historic village plaza. There, Blackburn and his team listened to the concerns and some criticism of the way veterans are treated with regard to a variety of health issues and benefits. For more, read the April 27, 2017 edition of Tempo magazine in The Taos News. You can see the YouTube video [HERE](#) – and read the entire article by Rick Romancito [HERE](#).

---

## Passamaquoddy Soldiers Featured in Smithsonian Documentary



Here's a short section [2:49] of a Smithsonian documentary highlighting the Passamaquoddy Tribe's involvement in WWI.

<http://www.smithsonianchannel.com/videos/what-do-native-american-carvings-in-french-wwi-quarries-mean/54318>

"Americans Underground: Secret City of WWI. An amazing discovery has been made beneath a farm field in Northern France: a vast underground city where World War I soldiers, on both sides of the conflict, took refuge a century ago. Even more remarkable, it is one of hundreds of buried havens set up close to a 45-mile stretch of the Western Front. Follow American explorer and photographer Jeff Gusky as he documents one of these long forgotten shelters, and witness his attempts to connect the names of the American soldiers etched into the limestone walls to their living descendants. Why is there a Native American canoe carved in an abandoned quarry inhabited by U.S. soldiers during WWI? The answer leads back to Point Pleasant, Maine--home of the Passamaquoddy Tribe."

## "Defending the Fire" Documentary

Here's a [LINK](#) for more information on a documentary focusing on Native American veterans.

"Since the beginning of time, Native American Warriors have navigated a unique cultural and spiritual path, relying on the tenets of the Warrior in ancient and modern warfare. The lessons of the Warrior are universal; the spirit of the Warrior survives, even in the face of conflict. With a focus on the spiritual and historic journey of Native American Warriors, Silver Bullet Productions will present the story of the Warrior, the importance of cultures in modern quests, and the lessons of War through the lens of these cultures. The characters will be elders and historians from New Mexican tribes and Native veterans of World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam and Afghanistan/Iraq conflicts. Grounded in research and guided by voices of men and women in our armed forces, the documentary will reveal the distinct motive, preparation, conflict, and healing of tribal soldiers."

<http://silverbulletproductions.com/documentary-films/modern-warrior/>

---

## Sweat Lodge Opens at Richmond VA Medical Center

**Richmond**  
magazine

Here's a short article written by Tharon Giddens, which ran in the [Richmond Magazine](#) on May 11, 2017.

"The latest addition to the campus at the Hunter Holmes McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center is decidedly low-tech. It's at the back of the complex, near the Hopkins Road gate. Driving by, you may miss it; It's just a half-circle skeleton of sticks enclosed with tarps. It faces east, and there's a dirt pile at its door, then a fire pit surrounded with rocks.

It looks out of place, but this is an inipi, a Native American sweat lodge. It's a place for cleansing and renewal, and for healing. The structure was dedicated in an event on May 8 that included a drum circle ceremony and prayers. The four circle participants performed honor songs. One was titled "Healing and Rejuvenation," apt topics for a VA facility, said circle participant Andrew Tyler, an Air Force veteran and a member of the Pamunkey tribe.

Native Americans have a long, storied tradition of service in the American armed forces. More than 44,000 saw service during World War II, and during the Vietnam War, more than 42,000 served, more than 90 percent as volunteers at a time when military ranks were filled through the draft, according to a 2012 report from the VA on American Indian and Alaska Native service members and veterans.

"We owe them the chance to practice their rites," Chaplain James Connolly said following the ceremony. "The Native American traditions deserve to be respected." It's the second sweat lodge at McGuire. There was one constructed there in the 1990s, and the new one is dedicated to Bobby Barlett, the driving force behind the first inipi and a Vietnam War veteran who was treated at McGuire, according to Jimmy Thunder Ortiz, a nephew of Barlett.

The Crewe resident led the effort to construct the new inipi here. "I took it upon myself to get it going," he says. A ceremony [was] held inside the lodge on May 20."

## Richmond VA Hospital Dedicates Native American Sweat Lodge

**Richmond Times-Dispatch**

Following that last piece, here's an article written by Katie O'Connor which ran in the [Richmond Times Dispatch](#) on May 8, 2017.



---

**Richmond Times-Dispatch**

“People who come out of the sweat lodge, according to Jimmy Thunder Ortiz, are reborn. “When you’re in there, you’re in Mother Earth’s womb,” he said. Andrew Tyler described the sweat lodge — or Inipi — as a sacred place, “No different than a cathedral or mosque or a synagogue.” “All the toxins we carry during the day are purified in the sweat that’s released from us,” Tyler said. “And this is what’s very helpful for veterans, because we carry a lot of things in us.”

Ortiz and Tyler were part of a ceremonial dedication of a new sweat lodge at McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Richmond on Monday. A sweat lodge ceremony is a spiritual experience in a variety of Native American cultures.

The site consists of a dome made out of fresh-cut saplings — typically covered by a large tarp — and a fire pit that is used to keep the rocks in the lodge hot. Participants sit around the rocks in darkness and heat.

“It is a place for us to gather together as native people to purify ourselves, to stand before the creator,” Tyler said. “You have all the elements that the creator has gifted to humans inside the Inipi — you have the air, the fire, the earth, the water.”

A sweat lodge has been on the medical center’s campus since 1995, when Bobby Bartlett, a Vietnam veteran and Ortiz’s uncle, launched it. When Bartlett died in 2016, Ortiz, who is considered a medicine man, took over the lodge and moved it to a different part of the campus.

American Indians and Alaskan Natives have one of the highest representations in the armed forces, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. “What drives a lot of questions when I tell people that is: Well why would you want to serve a government that has been so horrible to your people?” Tyler said. “Well the creator put us here on this land to be defenders of the land. Not defenders of the government, not defenders of any organization, but to defend the people.”

Tyler is a veteran himself, having served from 1978 to 1998 in the Air Force, but he was not diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder until 2015, he said. Veterans are often most in need of the sweat lodge spiritual experience, Ortiz said. When they participate in a ceremony, Ortiz will often tell them to repeat after him: “I am. I am worthy. I choose to do this because I am good.”

A variety of native cultures were represented at Monday’s event. Ortiz is Taíno, while Tyler is of Pamunkey and Cherokee descent. During the dedication, a group of four men sat around a drum, which Tyler said Native Americans refer to as “grandfather.”

“The drum is a gift to the people,” Tyler said. “These are the traditions we’ve had for thousands of years.” They sang several songs, hitting the drum and singing together. Between each song, the four would reach out and gently touch the drum.

“When I touch the drum and I bring it to my heart, I’m not worshipping the drum,” Tyler said. “I’m giving thanks that the creator gave us this beautiful gift, that we may share that gift with the people.””

---

## Cherokee program provides a helping hand to homeless veterans



Hers's an article written by John Klein which ran in the [Tulsa World](#) on May 17.

"Dennis Christie has a place to call his own. "It's great to finally have a nice place," he said. "It's good to have some place that I can call home." Christie is the first Cherokee Nation member to receive rental assistance under a new program to help homeless veterans. He now lives in a small one-bedroom apartment in Claremore. "It's helped me out a lot," Christie said. "It's a nice place. I can walk to everything. It's life-changing." Gary Cooper, director of the Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation, said Christie's story is what the tribe wants to hear. "That's exactly what we hoped would happen," Cooper said. "We got involved in this program hoping to give people a helping hand, not to give a handout.

"Obviously, through this program we're able to help a veteran who has served his country, a place he or she can call home. That's the purpose of what we're doing." The Cherokee Nation is among 26 tribes that received funding to provide housing for homeless veterans. Under the program, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs awarded \$5.9 million in grants to offer permanent homes and supportive services to Native American veterans who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Using \$200,000 from the grant, the Cherokee Nation is aiming to provide rental-assistance vouchers to as many as 20 veterans. "Dennis is our first recipient, but we're very optimistic about this program," Cooper said. "We work with the private sector. "We help locate a place to live for these veterans, and then we help arrange to pay the rent." Christie, who was born in Tahlequah, joined the Army a few years after graduating from Fort Gibson High School. He was deployed to Germany and was serving in Berlin when the Berlin Wall came down. As a veteran, he has suffered from chronic substance abuse, other health issues and homelessness. He recently completed a treatment program in preparation for getting off the street and into the apartment.

"It's a good location," he said. "This is a really nice neighborhood. ... It's close to everything. I can walk to the hospital and stores if I need something." The Cherokee Nation has a veterans center that offers resources and services to those who served. It also has a contract with the VA to treat Native American veterans with routine health care in tribal facilities. The housing grant program was announced in January 2016 in Tulsa by then-HUD Secretary Julian Castro during the Inter-Tribal Council for the Five Civilized Tribes. Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker praised the program, saying, "The partnership between HUD and the VA will ensure our Cherokee patriots get the assistance they need after serving our country." The Cherokee Housing Authority started working with Christie several months ago to get him into the program. He has been in his apartment about a month. "I'd been staying in the Salvation Army shelter in Tulsa," Christie said. "That was kind of uncertain. "Here I know I have a place to live. Having my own place will hopefully help me get back on track.""



## Hopi Veteran Wins 2017 National Veterans Creative Arts Competition Out of 1600 Entries

Hers's a [VA blog post](#) written by Stacie Rivera which ran in May 23.

Since he was 17 years old, this Army Veteran and Prescott, Arizona resident has lived the Hopi proverb that “time isn’t used; it’s experienced.” In 1976, Filmer Kewanyama enlisted in the Army straight out of the Sherman Indian Boarding School in Riverside, California. Fast forward some 40 years later and he is proud of his time as an Army Infantryman. His military career took him from the 11 Bravo Infantry for 21 years of service to teaching others as a senior military instructor of ROTC in northern California at UC Davis.

He admits that it may seem strange to have the Hopi heritage of peace guiding him and his call to serve in harm’s way. But Kewanyama says, “I never once regretted it.” He attributes his positive experience to the many Vietnam Veterans who came before him and who served as his mentors.



Although he enlisted in the Army as a way to support his family, it became his path to a life well-traveled, often taking him on a parallel journey of the Hopi people. Kewanyama explains that as he grew up within the tribe, he began to help his parents with art. Carving, painting, basketry – all become part of his life’s journey. Guided by both the rains and sun, Kewanyama says that as he moved from soldier to Veteran, he received good support from





the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA's Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VocRehab) helped him align his new calling and took him from teacher to student.

In 2010, Kewanyama earned an Associate Degree in Applied Science. His specialty was graphic design. He also returned to Hopi land and the Prescott area. There he discovered how much he loved to do artwork. This time he also decided to give back. He became an advocate for Veterans issues. Even today you can find him at the Prescott VA helping out other members of tribes as they navigate the VA health care system.

Now a retired father of five grown children and a grandfather, Kewanyama combines his soldier-teacher-student experience. He explains that art "is about healing yourself to be part of society." Today, he is an award-winning artist in his own right. He says that the process of creating art is a healing process. "Art helps me become more spiritual," he says. And he encourages Veterans to be part of some form of art therapy.

As an infantryman, he feels that he "was one of the fortunate ones." At the time, he says, "I was loving what I did." Today, his life's work is more about exploring the achievements of the Hopi people. In his latest work of art – "Homage to the Hopi Code Talkers" – he creates a painting that teaches about the code talkers of all tribes. There were several tribes involved in the code talking program in WWI and 14 tribes in WWII. Kewanyama had always known about the Hopi Code Talkers. However, he believes that nationally, little is widely known about this rare group of warriors. He was inspired by the Hopi's last code talker with whom he met and talked at the local VA. "I was so touched by him that I needed to do this painting."

After over a year of starting and stopping, perfecting and priming, Kewanyama entered his painting in the 2017 Veterans Creative Arts Competition and it landed first place out of 1,600 entries. He is excited to get to New York, finally! And so what began as an artistic journey in 2007 when a VA art therapist introduced him to this program in Prescott has taken him from "Best of Show" to "People's Choice" to national top-prize winner! With the humblest of character, Kewanyama says, "It is such an honor because I get to share the story of the Hopi Code Talkers."

In the painting, there is rich symbolism about the Hopi's process of growth. These men relied upon their faith and way of life to sustain them. Kewanyama relates to this and says, "I always carried cornmeal, bear root, red paint. These things were a form of medicine to help keep me safe, wherever I went. These men who are in my painting also had to be faithful and rely on ceremonies like I did."

Finally, the painting brings full circle a long line of military experience of the Hopi people who have responded to their country's call even though they are a people of peace, serving all Americans, not just the Hopi people. The American flag and Hopi symbol merge in Kewanyama's winning piece to show that they (and he) belong to both.



## NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL



Smithsonian  
Institution

Kevin Gover  
Director

National Museum of the American Indian

cordially invites Native Veterans and community members  
to a discussion about the National Native American Veterans Memorial

**Thursday, May 25, 2017  
10 AM – 12 PM**

**National Museum of the American Indian  
4th St. and Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20024**

The National Museum of the American Indian has been authorized by Congress to create  
a memorial honoring the service of Native Americans in the armed forces of the United States.

Led by the Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne) and the Honorable Jefferson Keel,  
Lieutenant Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, the memorial advisory committee  
welcomes your ideas for this important project.

RSVP to [NMAI-RSVP@si.edu](mailto:NMAI-RSVP@si.edu)  
[AmericanIndian.si.edu](http://AmericanIndian.si.edu)

If you are unable to attend the consultation it will be webcast and available at <http://nmai.si.edu/webcasts>



## Native American Summit / NVA Workshop Save the Date – June 23-24, 2017



2500 EAST SECOND STREET  
RENO, NV 89595

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

775.789.2000 | 800.501.2651

**\$126/RATE—SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE**



- TRIBAL VETERANS REPRESENTATIVE (TVR) TRAINING
- INFORMATION ON VA BENEFITS AND SERVICES
- NEVADA VETERANS ADVOCACY TRAINING
- NATIVE AMERICAN HOME LOAN PROGRAMS
- SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS TO ASSIST VETERANS
- VETERAN RESOURCE BOOTHS



Please register at: [https://mas\\_2017.eventbrite.com](https://mas_2017.eventbrite.com)  
Contact: [masonr@veterans.nv.gov](mailto:masonr@veterans.nv.gov) to reserve a resource booth(s):

Summit Program questions contact:

Steve Sitton at 775-321-4880 or

Terry Bentley at 541-440-1271





**INFORMATION SHEET**  
**Nevada Native American Summit/NVA Workshop**  
**23-24 June 2017**  
**Grand Sierra Resort (GSR), Reno Nevada**

Hosted by VA Office of Tribal Government Relations, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada and Nevada Department of Veterans Services.

NDVS is offering Scholarships, 2 per tribe, up to 27 for tribes that live at least 70 miles outside the Reno area. Scholarships will include 2 nights at the GSR, 22 & 23 Jun, mileage reimbursed from your home of record to the GSR and return and or an airline flight if in Southern Nevada. If individuals are driving a distance that exceeds 200 miles we will entertain accommodating a third night stay at the GSR, 24 Jun.

Lunches will be served on 23 & 24 Jun at the GSR.

This event is free for the two days that you are participating in the Summit and the NVA Workshop.

Topics for the summit will be determined by the ITCN and ICN. Topics for the NVA Workshop will coincide with the topics that will be presented by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) at the summit.

Director of Nevada Department of Veterans Services has directed that this be the Year of the Native American Veteran where we will focus our attention to the contributions, identify opportunities for expanded outreach to tribal communities, and establish training programs for tribal representatives to help them assist veterans navigate State and Federal veteran's benefits.

Part of the training program will be a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) On-Line Course that will be available to anyone that wants to learn more about this profession. This will be part of our process, as a department, to help train at least one individual in each tribe to become a VSO and help their veterans with benefits and claims. This is part of the new Federal Law, 38 CFR Part 14, that was established 11 January 2017. More details will be sent out for the Summit and the VSO Training at a later date.



## News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations  
Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 08, 2017

### **VA Secretary Announces Intention to Expand Mental Health Care to Former Servicemembers With Other-Than-Honorable Discharges and in Crisis**

WASHINGTON – Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin while testifying in a House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing on March 7, 2017, announced his intention to expand provisions for urgent mental health care needs to former servicemembers with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges. This move marks the first time a VA Secretary has implemented an initiative specifically focused on expanding access to assist former OTH servicemembers who are in mental health distress and may be at risk for suicide or other adverse behaviors.

“The President and I have made it clear that suicide prevention is one of our top priorities,” Shulkin. “We know the rate of death by suicide among Veterans who do not use VA care is increasing at a greater rate than Veterans who use VA care. This is a national emergency that requires bold action. We must and we will do all that we can to help former servicemembers who may be at risk. When we say even one Veteran suicide is one too many, we mean it.”

It is estimated that there are a little more than 500,000 former service members with OTH discharges. As part of the proposal, former OTH servicemembers would be able to seek treatment at a VA emergency department, Vet Center or contact the Veteran Crisis Line.

“Our goal is simple, to save lives,” Shulkin continued. “Veterans who are in crisis should receive help immediately. Far too many Veterans have fallen victim to suicide, roughly 20 every day. Far too many families are left behind asking themselves what more could have been done. The time for action is now.”

Before finalizing the plan in early summer, Shulkin will meet with Congress, Veterans Service Organizations, and Department of Defense officials to determine the best way forward to get these Veterans the care they need.

“I look forward to working with leaders like Congressman Mike Coffman from Colorado, who has been a champion for OTH servicemembers. I am grateful for his commitment to our nation's Veterans and for helping me better understand the urgency of getting this right,” added Shulkin.

Veteran in crisis, should call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or texting 838255.

Information about the Crisis Line is available at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net).





## VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM LAW CHANGES

FACT SHEET  
APRIL, 2017

On April 19, 2017, The President signed a law that removes the August 7, 2017 expiration date and allows VA to utilize funding dedicated to the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) until it is exhausted. The VCP is a critical program that increases access to care for Veterans by authorizing millions of appointments for Veterans in the community. This fact sheet highlights the three changes made to the VCP.

### Change 1 – Removal of Expiration Date:

The law removes the August 7, 2017 expiration date for the VCP. The VCP will continue until the original \$10 billion dollars is spent. Based on current estimates, funds for the VCP will last through January 2018, but could shift to fall of 2017 if more Veterans use the program.

#### Impact to Veterans:

- Veterans eligible for the VCP will continue receiving care from providers in the community.

#### Impact to community providers:

- Community providers can continue delivering care to Veterans.

### Change 2 – Primary Coordinator of Benefits:

VA is now the Primary Coordinator of Benefits for services provided to Veterans under the VCP. This common sense change VA requested from Congress more closely aligns the VCP with the other community care programs.

#### Impact to Veterans:

- Before this law change, some Veterans were required to pay the cost-shares/co-pays associated with their private health insurance, now those Veterans will not have to pay the cost-shares/co-pays to their private health insurance carrier.

#### Impact to community providers:

- Originally, some community providers had to bill the Veterans' private health insurance and the VCP. With the law change community providers will now only have to bill the VCP.

### Change 3 – Information Sharing:

Previously, VA had a restriction different from other health care providers regarding the exchange of health information. This law removes these restrictions and ensures that community providers have access to appropriate health information for Veterans and brings VA in line with other health care providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information. We emphasize that this does not create an exception to, or weaken in any manner, the protections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

#### Impact to Veterans:

- Veterans will experience improved continuity and quality of care because community providers will have appropriate access to necessary medical records.

#### Impact to community providers:

- Community providers will now have access to all appropriate health information for Veterans.







### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### Has eligibility for the VCP changed?

No. The law did not change eligibility for the VCP. Please refer to the VCP website for information regarding eligibility here: <https://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>

#### Did the law make the Veterans Choice Program permanent?

No. The law allows VA to use the remaining funds available for the VCP. VA has partnered with Congress to work through remaining legislative needs to build a single community care program.

#### Do Veterans still have to provide VA their private health insurance information?

Yes. The Choice law requires Veterans to provide VA with their private health insurance information in order to use the program. The new law means that Veterans will no longer be responsible for cost-shares/co-pays associated with their private health insurance. It also means community providers will no longer have to bill a Veterans private health insurance and the VCP, they will only have to bill the VCP.

#### Does the information sharing provision in the law put my health information at risk?

No. This law does not put any health insurance information at risk. Previously VA had restrictions different from other health care providers regarding the exchange of Veterans health information. This law removes those restrictions and ensures that community providers have access to appropriate health information for Veterans and brings VA in line with other health providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information.

#### Did the law provide VA the authority it needs to reform the Veterans Choice Program?

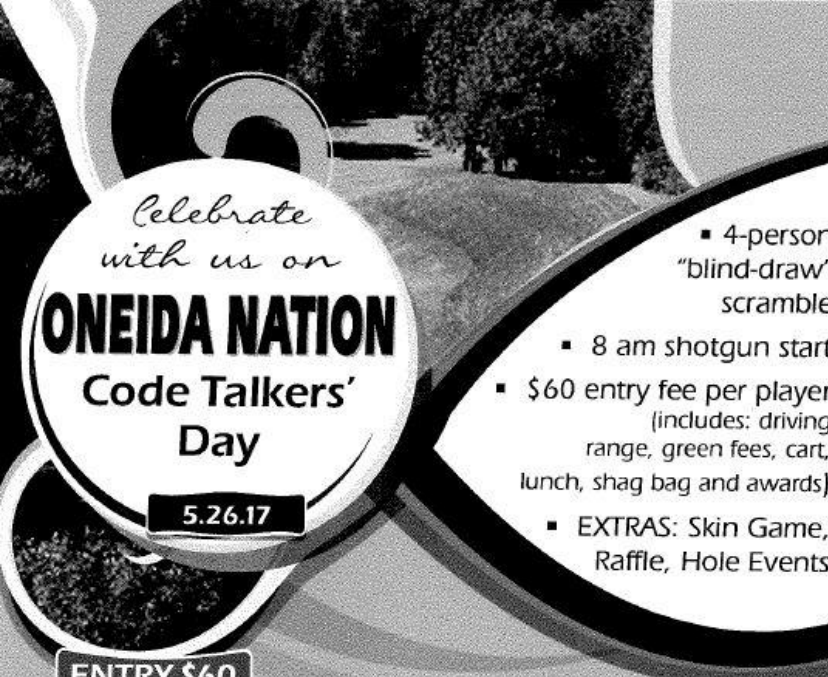
This law makes meaningful improvements for the VCP, but more needs to be done. The law is a bridge to allow VA time to partner with Congress and all of our stakeholders to create one community care program that is simple to administer, easy to understand, and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff.





## OTGR Central Region

(IA; MI; MN; MT; ND; NE; SD; WI; WY)





*Celebrate with us on*  
**ONEIDA NATION**  
**Code Talkers' Day**  
**5.26.17**

**ENTRY \$60**

- 4-person "blind-draw" scramble
- 8 am shotgun start
- \$60 entry fee per player (includes: driving range, green fees, cart, lunch, shag bag and awards)
- EXTRAS: Skin Game, Raffle, Hole Events

**ONEIDA NATION**  
**Code Talkers' Day**  
**GOLF OUTING**

**FRI // 26 // MAY // 2017**  
**Thornberry Creek at Oneida**  
Call us for more details **920-562-7536**

**HOSTED BY**  
**ONEIDA NATION VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**FIRST 144 PAID ENTRIES WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY**

**REGISTER NOW**  
**2017 ONEIDA NATION**  
**Code Talkers' Day**  
**GOLF OUTING 5.26.17**

Name .....

Veteran: Yes No Gender: M F Age: .....

Tribal Affiliation: .....

Phone: .....

Drop off completed entry with fee at the Oneida Veteran's Service Office  
134 Riverdale Dr, Oneida, WI 54155



---

## **OTGR Southern Plains Region**

(KS; OK; TX )



# **TRIBAL HUD/VASH**

## **HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM**

**ARE YOU NATIVE AMERICAN**  
**AND A**  
**FORMER MILITARY/VETERAN OR KNOW SOMEONE**  
**WHO IS?**  
**ARE THEY HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BEING**  
**HOMELESS?**

**CONTACT ME FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE IF  
YOU QUALIFY FOR THIS LONG TERM HOUSING  
VOUCHER PROGRAM.**

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS**  
Lisa Look, MSW, LCSW, LADAC  
Tribal HUD/VASH Case Manager for Cherokee Nation  
1011 Honor Heights Drive  
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401  
Phone: (918) 616-8794 | Fax: (918) 577-3329  
[Lisa.Look@va.gov](mailto:Lisa.Look@va.gov)



---

## Tulsa Tech

### Information Relating to Military Tuition Waiver



This is a Financial Assistance opportunity included in [Tulsa Tech Financial Assistance](#) flyer along with other Scholarships and Grants. The program was approved by the Board of Education in 2016 and is intended to fill a gap in the availability of VA Educational Benefits which are current not able to be approved for many of the Tulsa Tech Full-Time programs due to issue relating to accreditation.

#### *Military Tuition Waiver*

*Oklahoma veterans are eligible to attend one full time program tuition free. Applicants must have served active duty in the U.S. Military and have been honorably discharged within the last 15 years.*

The term "one full time program", also referred to as "one full time career major", includes any "Full-Time Programs" contained in the current "[Make Your Own Path - Full-Time Classes](#)" catalog which are identified for "**Adults**". The selection of the "one full-time program" will cover the entire duration of the program, for example a [Powersports Technology](#) program of 5 months (all day) to 27-30 months (Evening) program for [Aviation Generals](#). Note that this is a waiver of Tuition only. Any books or other related costs/expenses are not included in this program.

The Military Tuition Waiver application is available online via the HUB.

[https://hub.tulsatech.edu/studentresources/financialassistance/Documents/Military Tuition Waiver Application v2.pdf](https://hub.tulsatech.edu/studentresources/financialassistance/Documents/MilitaryTuitionWaiverApplication_v2.pdf)

Eligibility Criteria are listed on the application as follows:

1. Must have served on active duty and must have been honorably discharged.
2. Must use this scholarship within 15 years of the date of separation from the U.S. Military.
3. Must be an Oklahoma resident.

A copy of a valid OK Driver's License or OK State issued ID and copy of DD-214 are required to be provided with the application.

Note that the applicant must go through the standard application process and be selected for the application program. Not every program will have availability for each applicant.

For details and face-to-face assistance for this program, the Tulsa Tech contact is:

Samantha Alberty  
Financial Assistance Consultant  
918 828-5223  
[Samantha.alberty@tulsatech.edu](mailto:Samantha.alberty@tulsatech.edu)

Located on the Tulsa Tech [Lemley](#) Memorial Campus at 3420 S Memorial Drive  
Office in the Career Service Center (CSC) building, Financial Aid Office  
Follow Signs for "ENROLLMENT"

## OTGR Southwest Region

(AZ; CO; NM; UT)



**1st Annual Navajo Nation Veterans Summit**

**VETERANS**

Navajo Nation Veterans Administration

**DATE**

**JULY 10TH 9 AM - 5 PM**  
**JULY 11TH, 9AM - 5 PM**

**PLACE**

**DINE COLLEGE**  
**1 CIRCLE DRIVE**  
**TSAILE, ARIZONA 86556**

**VA Benefits**  
**VA Pensions**  
**VA Healthcare**  
**VA Survivor Benefits**

**Transportation**  
**Education**  
**eBenefits** My healthvet  
**State Veterans Benefits**

**POC: Hubert Smith Acting Director Navajo Nation Veterans Administration**  
**(928) 871-6413**

**Housing** **Women Veterans** **Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD)** **Suicide Prevention**

**Tribal Benefits**

**Dine College** **Swords to Plowshares** **Utah Division of Indian Affairs** **VMA** **Tso Dzil** **Color Guard** **Special Care at Home** **Office of Tribal Government Relations** **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**





# O'ODHAM VETERANS CELEBRATION COMMITTEE 2017

## EVENT



## DATES

**AUGUST 05, 2017**

SALT RIVER PIMA MARICOPA INDIAN  
COMMUNITY

**480.209.7459**

SALT RIVER, ARIZONA

**POC: [delphine.burbank@srpmic-nsn.gov](mailto:delphine.burbank@srpmic-nsn.gov)**

**AUGUST 26, 2017**

WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE

**928.594.0273**

WHITE RIVER, ARIZONA

**POC: [d.faden@hotmail.com](mailto:d.faden@hotmail.com)**

**SEPTEMBER 26, 2017**

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY

**602.327.5973**

CASA BLANCA ARIZONA

**POC: [douglas.ivan@gric-nsn.us](mailto:douglas.ivan@gric-nsn.us)**

**SEPTEMBER 30, 2017**

SOLOMON/SAN CARLOS APACHE

**928.965.0765**

SAN CARLOS, ARIZONA

**POC: [rcajpac@hotmail.com](mailto:rcajpac@hotmail.com)**

**OCTOBER 07, 2017**

PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE

**602.615.1555**

GUADALUPE, ARIZONA

**POC: [guadalupenost124@gmail.com](mailto:guadalupenost124@gmail.com)**

**OCTOBER 21, 2017**

TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION

**520.383.1900**

SELLS, ARIZONA

**POC: [ierilyn.ivan@tonation-nsn.gov](mailto:ierilyn.ivan@tonation-nsn.gov)**

[oodham.veterans@gmail.com](mailto:oodham.veterans@gmail.com)





For Immediate Release: Jan. 25, 2017  
Contact: ADOT Public Information Office  
[news@azdot.gov](mailto:news@azdot.gov) -or- 1.800.949.8057

**New verification method means veteran specialty plates may now be  
ordered online**  
*Office visit no longer required*

**PHOENIX** – Ordering a veteran specialty license plate no longer requires standing in line at an Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division office. With the introduction of a new electronic affidavit system to verify a veteran's status, plates may now be ordered at [ServiceArizona.com](http://ServiceArizona.com), skipping the office visit.

"As MVD continues to be ahead of the curve by improving customer service, this is one of the more gratifying changes we've made," said MVD Director Eric Jorgensen. "MVD is proud to provide these plates to honor our veterans and it's very important to make it as easy as possible for our customers get out of line and safely on the road."

Under state law, only veterans and their immediate family members may apply for a veteran plate. Until now, this plate could only be ordered in person at an MVD or Authorized Third Party location where the applicant would have to show veteran status documentation.

To allow for online ordering, MVD developed an electronic affidavit system that the applicant must initial before the transaction can be completed. MVD has also established an auditing compliance system to review applications to ensure that only those who are legally eligible receive the plate.

Each month, more than 1,200 applications for these plates are processed at MVD offices. Allowing this transaction to be done online will not only allow customers to order the plate at their convenience, but will reduce the amount of customer traffic at MVD offices.


In fiscal year 2016, veteran plates generated just over \$1.2 million for a special veterans fund administered by the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services.

For more information on specialty plates, please visit [www.azdot.gov/mvd](http://www.azdot.gov/mvd).

# # #



# MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ORIENTATION




**What:** Come learn about all the services Mental Health has to offer at the main hospital and surrounding clinics.

**Where:** PVAHCS Jade/Opal Clinic  
650 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ 85012

**When:** 3rd Wednesday of each month  
12 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.

**Who:** ALL VETERANS ARE WELCOME

No Referral Needed  
*KNOWLEDGE IS POWER*



VA U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs  
Phoenix VA  
Health Care System

(UNCLASSIFIED FUN)



# Warrior Walks

## 2017 VETERAN HIKING SERIES

Your local Vet Center has joined with several partners to bring you our monthly *Warrior Walks* veteran hiking groups. Come out and join us at one of our sites on a social hike. All are welcome.

**CHINLE, AZ**  
**CROWNPOINT, NM**  
**GALLUP, NM**  
**GRANTS, NM**  
**WINDOW ROCK, AZ**

*For more information and dates contact*  
**Robertson Yazzie Jr**  
**505-242-1747**  
*Or*  
**The Farmington Vet Center**  
**505-327-9684**

*Event is brought to you by the Farmington Vet Center "Keeping the Promise". We are the people at the VA who welcome home war veterans with honor by providing quality readjustment counseling in a caring manner.*

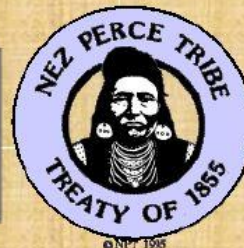


(UNCLASSIFIED FUN)



## OTGR Western Region

(AK; CA; ID; NV; OR; WA)



### **Veterans Training Summit Save the Date - June 14-16, 2017**



Clearwater River Casino  
Lewiston, Idaho  
Hotel Reservations: 208-298-1400  
\$70/rooms

- ☐ Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) Training
- ☐ Information on VA benefits and services
- ☐ Subject Matter Experts to assist Veterans
- ☐ Mobile Medical Unit
- ☐ Mobile Vet Center
- ☐ Veteran Resource Booths

Please register at: [terry.bentley@va.gov](mailto:terry.bentley@va.gov)  
Reserve resource booth: [terry.bentley@va.gov](mailto:terry.bentley@va.gov)

Questions contact:  
Mary Taylor at 208-621-4738  
Terry Bentley at 541-440-1271